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At a 1967 institute hosted by the Department of Public Instruction in Iowa, the following three papers were presented: (1) "The School as a Social Institution and Setting for Practice"; (2) "Factors which Affect a Model for School Social Work Practice"; and (3) "The Social Worker as a Link between School, Home, and Community." Appended are the institute program, a list of the trainees and participants by discipline, major responsibilities of school social work as identified by institute trainees, and an explanation of the graduate social work curriculum. (WR)

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THE SCHOOL AS A SETTING FOR

# Social Work Services

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# Introduction

Iowa is seeing a rather definite growth in the employment of school social workers. The reasons are twofold:

- There is an increasing realization that disturbance in children, delinquency in adolescents, and under-achievements in school are frequently related to personal and social adjustment problems of an out-of-school (home and community) origin.
- The funding of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided the means for many school districts to initiate a service of school social work as an extension of their present services.

As is crucial in any newly-expanding program, it seemed wise to step back a moment and assess the job that needed to be done. By bringing together three leaders in the field of social work education and practice we attempt to say. . .

- What about the school as a place of practice?
- What should we know about school policy, administration, and the other professionals employed therein?
- How will this affect how we go about our job?
- What is that job with reference to the home, the larger community, and school experience?

Through group discussions, participants wrestled with the concepts which our workshop leaders outlined so as to examine these concepts in terms of their local concerns. We are happy to be able to share these papers with you as a partial product of our institute. The total product will be one of growing service to children in an effort to support every child in attaining the most complete and rewarding education possible.

*Larry D. Pool, Consultant*
School Social Work Services, Title I
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# The School As a Social Institution and Setting for Practice

*by N. Deming Hoyt*

We have been presented with a unique opportunity in this conference. Jerry Kelley, Larry Merl, and I have been asked to discuss—in our own professional terms—some of the problems which social workers face when they practice in that unique host setting, the public schools. What is unusual is that this professional discourse and exchange of views is taking place before an audience the majority of whom are not social workers.

Represented here are all the specialists with whom the school social worker comes in contact daily: teachers, principals, visiting teachers, school psychologists, guidance personnel, school nurses, and many others.

To explore social work practice in the school setting before a group as broadly representative as this is a rare challenge. For we are compelled to look closely at the way in which we communicate with our colleagues in the schools. If that communication has been less than adequate we must have the honesty and courage to admit it and attempt to find ways of improving it.

How does a professional social worker view practice in the public setting? While there certainly are broad differences over this question in the profession, on one point there may be agreement. This is that school social work is perhaps one of the most exciting areas of specialization in the field of social work today. The reason for this is a primary focus that is almost by definition preventive. And prevention has been the dream of mental health professionals, not the least social workers, since the very early days of community concern over mental health. We have known, all of us, that to be truly effective we must get to the problem before it develops into a full-fledged, highly complex pattern so deeply rooted in the character of the young adult that it becomes less and less accessible to treatment.

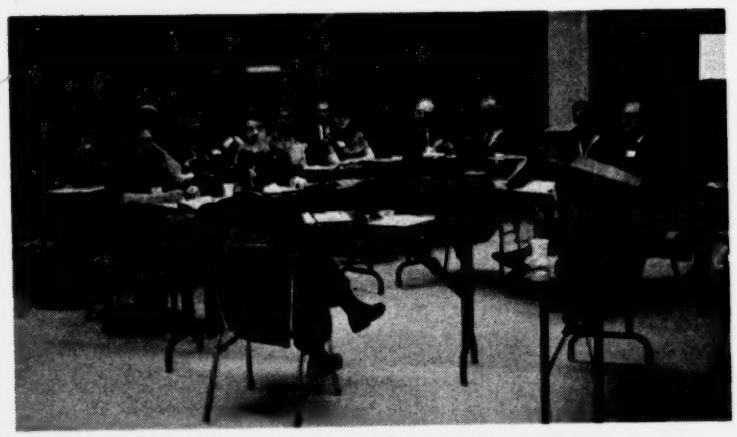
We can now face squarely a problem which has been hanging over our heads for many years. This is that so long as we wait until after the damage has been done to provide help, the result is a foregone conclusion: The demand for highly trained and skilled professionals is insatiable and can never be filled. Furthermore, the time needed to

make even a small impact on the situation is beyond our powers. Worst of all, not only are we not gaining in improving mental health in the community; we are actually falling behind.

It was inevitable that we should reach the point, as we have today, where we are searching for new approaches to these problems. And of these the two most important are the stress on prevention, getting to the problem while the child is still at the formative stage; the second is the increasing interest in community-oriented mental health programs.

It is in these terms that school social work is in the vanguard of current thinking about mental health because it is both community-oriented and preventive. How remarkable the prospect is! We have before us the entire child population. We can observe the full range of adjustment, from the children whose growth and development is highly successful to those who present the wide range of adjustment problems with which we are all so familiar. We also have the full range of family patterns. These are so familiar to us!

There is the "good" or well-adjusted family whose children will almost certainly arrive at adulthood reasonably intact, yet even these families can make mistakes in handling sometimes due to factors beyond their control. There is the broken home, or the disorganized family, or the parents who carry into their child-rearing their own painful life experiences. And it is in such families as we know so well, that the birth, growth and development of a child so often triggers all kinds of feeling and unresolved conflicts which get focused on the child.



*N. Deming Hoyt discussion group*

But this is only the beginning of the opportunities available to us in school social work. For we see the child and his family in their natural, day-to-day living context, not in the necessarily artificial atmosphere of agency, hospital or doctor's office. We can observe regularly and over a period of time the life-style of each family group: Its way of adapting to legal authority and the demands of the school as well as its capacity to accept what the school has to give. We are close enough also to see how families deal with the world of work and of budgets, how they use their leisure, what role religious belief or faith plays in their lives. Above all we can see them, as a family unit, for the child mirrors the intricate pattern of relationships which is characteristic of the family, both in this generation and those which have preceded him.

In addition to all this, think of the resources available to us! You know what they are. There is, first, the school itself and one of the first things we need to do in this new era of mental health service, is to recognize and document its tremendous potential. One of the things we have too long neglected is the positive impact of the school in the life of the child. And this impact comes not only from teacher and principal and specialized personnel, it comes also from the pattern and the ritual of the school day and the time-oriented sequence of movement through the grades. Once we understand the importance of this unique resource we truly help the child who is in trouble and above all support and reinforce the goals of treatment programs.

Finally, we school social workers have—I think it is safe and fair to say,—neglected an unusual, indeed a unique opportunity, which is available to us and perhaps to us alone in social work. We are able to measure our effectiveness as practitioners and, indeed, are likely—unless we take the initiative—to be forced to do so. The reason is probably obvious. If we work with a child or his family or both (and this includes those cases referred to outside agencies), we can go on observing this same child, so long as he stays in the system, year after year. You may be sure that if what we (or the agency) have done is not effective, we will know it. It will be brought to our attention. If the child has not benefited from treatment it will be our obligation to find out why. This is the only way in which we can increase our competence and our effectiveness. Don't you agree with me that it is time we began to examine what we are doing in terms

of results? And don't you also agree that, though we may have discouragements, the prospect is also exciting?

• • •

Now despite all these exciting possibilities and prospects for school social work there are times at our professional meetings when there seems to be an air of uncertainty, as though we were not sure who we are or what we are doing. Let us not be disturbed about this, as we sometimes are. For it is a sign of health and budding maturity. There is nothing more deadly, indeed more dangerous, than a profession which is sure of what it is and what it is supposed to do. There can be no end to professional growth, but to achieve it we must constantly reexamine and reevaluate ourselves and what we are doing. In our case, at this moment in time, we should be groping and not quite sure of our identity because ours is a relatively new field of practice in the social work profession.

Among the problems which tend to produce a certain amount of floundering and uncertainty, I suspect one of the most important is related to our professional identity, the who we are and what we are, the definition of our role not only in relation to the various professional specializations in the schools, but in relation to our fellow social workers in other settings. In the last analysis the problem is one of communication. And though that word has been over-used to the point of triteness, it is absolutely crucial for us in our context here. If part of our problem here is to examine closely and frankly the ways in which we do or do not communicate adequately, I think we will find that our effectiveness or lack of it is closely related in this question of identity.

The general problem with which this panel of speakers will deal is: How can all of us in the school setting, teachers, principals, guidance counselors and other specialists, pull together as a genuine team? It should be especially stressed that the word "team" as we think of it here means just what it says—pulling together, as equals, toward a common goal. My special assignment is to discuss with you this problem of identity and communication. And this means to look very frankly at the role and place of the social worker in this remarkable host setting.

## Some Basic Issues

The moment we seek to do this we face an obstacle in the form of certain problems or issues which have too long been evaded or ignored. So long as we try to push these issues aside or pretend

they are not there as we sometimes do, we will not be communicating across disciplinary and professional lines. We certainly will not arrive at clarity in understanding our role in the schools.

*1. The "helping professions" and professional education*

The first issue has to do with the long-standing distinction between the "helping professions" and professional education. The moment you take it out and look at it in the light of day you are bound to be struck by the strangeness, the incongruity of such a distinction. That there is a difference in training and professional orientation between the two groups of professions is obvious. At the same time to take the position that professionals in education are not a part of mental health programs designed to help children and their families, is to defeat our purpose at the outset. The fact is that teachers, principals, as well as other specialized personnel in the schools, do help the child with problems.

We can go further than this and say that the schools do more for the mental health of children than they are ever given credit for.

From this we can make a much needed criticism of the mental health professions: That they have overlooked or ignored the tremendous helping resources in the schools. Worse, they seem to have assumed at times that there is very little that school people know or have to say about a child. Still worse, there is an unspoken assumption that, if anything, the impact of the schools at best is minor, at worst negative. The result is a communication problem with which we are all familiar. It can be simply described: There is an abyss between the two groups. The communication in some areas is almost non-existent. This is something that we simply must do something about.

*2. Educators as our hosts*

This hardly seems to be an "issue," yet let us admit that social workers have sometimes made it one by their attitudes and behavior toward school personnel. The simple and obvious fact is that we function in educators' territory. We have no mandate to move in on the school—though too often that is the impression given. Nor can we hope to practice effectively without the willing consent of those with whom we work. Isn't it extraordinary that it should be necessary to say this?

The point is that educators are our hosts. *They* have invited us to join *them* and, by definition, and in common courtesy, they must be our colleagues and equals in every sense of the term. To the degree

that we forget this we will most certainly be ineffective. Furthermore we have an obligation to our hosts and this is to function well, to understand the structure of the school and, above all, be aware of the affects of that structure on the people who work within it.

*3. Need for self-awareness*

In no other setting is the need for self-awareness more pressing than in the host setting of the schools. Again it seems odd that it should be necessary to describe this as an issue, even in fact to discuss it, for we stress self-awareness both in our training and in our practice in social work. Yet this special aspect of social-work training seems to have a special meaning in the rather unusual context of the schools. And this is worth looking at rather closely.

One way of looking at this professional problem is to remember that our choice of profession is never a random one. We know that there are self-selective factors at work. It is commonplace for us to say that our choice of occupation tends to satisfy our emotional needs. And this is just as true of social workers as it is of, say, teachers or any other profession. In these terms teachers are likely to be more comfortable teaching than they might be in another occupation, and again the same is true of social workers.

The point at which this kind of self-selection becomes important in terms of self-awareness is that while teachers may be relatively comfortable in the line-and-staff setting of the schools, social workers as a group tend to be less so.

I will have a good deal to say about this later on, but at this point let us recognize this as a real test of our capacity to be truly aware of ourselves. It is we in the social work profession who have stressed the need for self-knowledge, for awareness of our feelings—not educators. It is we who drum into our students the importance, in relating to clients, of "using ourselves." It is, therefore, *our* obligation to our hosts to understand differences of this kind and be flexible and to adapt, to pull together with our educational colleagues. It is worth stressing that it is *our* responsibility to adapt to the school. It is not to be expected that our hosts will adapt to our professional view *in terms of their professional function.* This seems to me to be one of the most crucial issues that we face. For social workers have too often forgotten this and seemed to assume that while it is not necessary for them to understand the schools, or the thinking of educators, it is inexplicable that the educator does not understand them. To the

extent we have thought in such terms, how can we, with our professional training, justify it?

*4. Inter-agency communication*

The fourth issue is one that we have for too long ignored and one which we must face if we are indeed going to move forward with broader mental health programs. We are all of us aware in varying degrees of the poor state of communication between the various agencies in the community—between hospitals, family service agencies, child guidance clinics, welfare agencies, not to mention private practitioners both in general medical practice as well as psychiatry. In a real sense the left hand does not know what the right is doing, and all too often these resources are working at cross-purposes. But this is by no means the whole picture. What is even worse is that communication between all these resources taken as a group, and the schools, is almost non-existent in any serious professional sense.

Through conferences like this one we should make it known in the clearest terms that this is one of the most serious problems we face in this new, community-oriented era of mental health practice. This problem of communication between mental health resources and the schools varies from community to community. There are some which have made really serious efforts to bridge the gap. There can be no doubt however that it exists in enough communities to constitute a real barrier to progress in mental health.

Now what is the role of professional educators, and what are their feelings about this situation? If we were to do a study of how educators feel, for example, about referrals to agencies and the results of such referrals the outcome would be almost a foregone conclusion. It is practically certain that we would find a widespread feeling, at the point of referral, that the line of communication had been cut if, indeed, it ever really existed. We would find as fact, not feeling, that school personnel are not informed when the child is on a waiting list or actually accepted in treatment (sometimes after a wait of many months). No one is there to tell them how the child may react to treatment, reactions which will most certainly show in the classroom and on the playground. Above all neither teachers nor principals are consulted about their helping role in the treatment program.

The incongruity of this situation—frankly its Alice-in-Wonderland quality—may be brought into focus with one simple well-known fact: The child who is in treatment is also in school, under the influence of

teachers, principal *and* his peer group for some 35 hours a week! Why is it that we take for granted the need to work with parents so as to reinforce gains made in treatment, yet ignore the quite critical need to do the same thing with the school? Isn't this a genuine blind spot and isn't it our responsibility to recognize that such a break-off in communication as this can no longer be tolerated?

For while this situation exists, and while communication is inadequate, one way or even non-existent, by definition only half a helping job is being done at best. The treatment being given by the agency is simply not being supported or reinforced in the 35 hours weekly that the child is in school. Yet who can deny what an enormous impact the school community has in the life of the child?

We have a crude yet fairly accurate measure of the serious results of this situation. Ask yourselves how many times children referred to you have already been in treatment in the past, sometimes over a fairly extensive period. Yet, at the time they are referred to you, from two or three or more years later, they exhibit the same symptoms (or worse) which prompted the original referral. Does this suggest that the clinics are not really helping? I am sure it does not. What it does point up inexorably is a waste and inefficiency in our present isolated efforts to help that can no longer be justified.

*5. Different versions of the same child*

There is another dimension of this poor communication between mental health resources and the schools which we should examine with special care and interest. The medical or mental health practitioner, whether in private practice, in the hospital or in the agency setting, sees one dimension of the child; the school sees another. It may be commonplace to say that the child is one personality in the one-to-one situation as compared to his group behavior. Yet why is it that we have made so little effort to study this difference closely? Above all, why have we not recognized its significance in the treatment programs and goals which we plan for the child?

The fact is that school personnel see the child not only as an individual but also in terms of what might be called his "group personality." You may see this very dramatically if you will work with a child both individually and as a member of a group. You may also contrast him as he is alone with you in your office, and what he is like on the playground. If you have seen these two dimensions in the child you may well ask whether the agency practitioner, unable

to see his client in the group situation, can really reach him at those points where help is most urgently needed.

There is a further point which is very familiar to school personnel but which seems to be little known, or regarded as of minor importance in too many agencies. This is the enormous impact of the peer group in the life of every child, an impact which, for the healthy child can be of primary importance in his growth and development. For the disturbed child it can be negative and damaging to the point where it is extremely painful to observe. In terms of treatment, and especially retention of gains made in treatment, the significance of the peer group should never be underestimated. For the child may learn in the agency that he need not play the clown, that there are healthier and happier forms of adaptation than he has heretofore used. But when he returns to his peer group he will discover again and again that his peers will not permit him to change. They have labelled him, typed him. He has a place in the pecking order. Once his role has been so defined the peer group will insist in subtle but effective and often cruel ways, that he maintain it. It may not be too much to say that the failure of many children to retain gains made in treatment can be ascribed to this one factor alone.

Since agencies have devoted little time to follow-up studies they may not even be aware of this situation. We can help them by doing follow-up studies and asking them to help us evaluate them.

The point we need to stress in this conference is that school social workers, with their colleagues in the schools, have a different image of the child from that of the agency. To this extent, school and agency may be talking about two different dimensions of the same child. One illustration of this is the irritation and anger of the agency when the school suspends a child, often not punitively, but as a protection to himself and to others. The agency simply does not know what he is like in the class or peer group situation. Is it asking too much of our mental health agencies to say that almost by definition they should know?

• • •

The problems and issues which face us now and will face us in the years ahead are too numerous to discuss here. The five chosen represent, it is hoped, a sampling of the kinds of questions we need to ask and the kind of reevaluation of what we are doing that we must undertake.

## THE TRANSITION

When the social worker leaves the clinic or the agency and enters the school he is meeting issues and problems like this head-on. His very presence in the schools is a beginning in finding solutions. For to the extent that he establishes cordial relationships with teachers and principals he is providing the basis for understanding and sound communication. Furthermore his presence in the school alleviates the loneliness of the teacher, the feeling so many teachers experience that there is no one with whom they can share a problem, no one willing to work with them toward a solution. The school social worker has the further advantage that he can communicate directly. He is on the spot when problems arise and crises occur.

There is no doubt that this is, or should be, a solid foundation for school social work. We must qualify this, however. For it will not be a solid foundation unless the school social worker genuinely understands his host setting and reaches out to his educational colleagues.

We make the flat assumption that he will not achieve this goal by "bucking the system," or becoming preoccupied with status and training. Above all he will undermine his own and his profession's prestige by indulging in interdisciplinary battles over status and competence. No one is a victor in such struggles because the end result is lasting resentment on both sides and loss of the opportunity ever to pull together. In such situations it is the child who is the loser.

How then does the school social worker develop understanding of schools and school personnel? One way of attempting to answer this question—of trying to examine his problems of adaptation, is to follow the social worker as he goes through three hypothetical phases in his experience and, hopefully, growth in the school situation.

### *Phase I: First Contacts and Reactions*

Let us assume that a social worker with agency experience has decided to accept a position as a school social worker. We must ask at the outset what he brings with him to this strikingly different situation. In raising this question we will not have in mind his professional experience or his skills because we can, I think, feel confident about his competence as a professional. What we are concerned about are any preconceptions, attitudes, above all stereotypes about the schools and school personnel which he may, sometimes without being aware of it, bring with him as he first enters the schools.

His character, his flexibility and adaptability will be tested to the

limit. We will need to know about him how strong such attitudes and stereotypes are and to what degree he is aware of them. Is he capable of modifying attitudes and preconceptions and of recognizing stereotypes for what they are? So what we look for are his initial reactions.

First, how does he see and how does he respond to the school as a complex institutional structure? He is likely to have, almost overwhelmingly, the "I knew it would be like this" reaction. The feeling is overwhelming because the school whether for child, teacher, parent or new social worker, is massive in its impact, and triggers latent memories of one's own experience in that same institution.

What hits him immediately are two things: the charm and vitality of hundreds of children swirling around him on the playground and in the building. The contrast comes in the restrictions imposed by the institution on the individual. Of these the most obvious and persistent is the pressure of time. No other institution in our society is so conscious of time, so sequential in its goals and objectives. One has the sense that children move through time from minute-to-minute, day-to-day and year-to-year and the sense of this expectation of movement is in the very air one breathes in the school. One of its most dramatic manifestations is the school bell and the expectant waiting of children outside the doors for it to ring. The bell, which can jar the unwary with its insistence, marks off the school day into neat periods which every child is expected to know. There are also the school busses with their railroad-like schedules: arriving and discharging their human cargo with a dispatch that resembles a freight terminal on split-second timing.

With this overwhelming sense of time and schedules goes the sense of control. The movement of children within the school building must meet the demands of tight scheduling. What particularly strikes the school social worker, however, is children lined up in twos as they march through the halls into the classroom. He finds it painful to see how school personnel restrict the free oral or physical expression of children as they move through the building and even as they sit in class.

The dazed new school social worker begins to find the atmosphere repressive. There is the ritual of the class day with its 40-minute periods. The children must sit, quietly and silently (how painful for them!) and their play periods, also regimented, are all too brief. Perhaps the most shattering experience is to watch children marched

by twos into the cafeteria in silence, to gulp down their meals in about 20 minutes so as to be out when other groups come in. And so it is until the very end of the school day, the last bell and the last bus. Occasionally, even then, like an absentminded afterthought, the school bell will ring out to an empty building as though reminding any who might be left how much it dominates the school experience of children.

The social worker may find himself wondering who is responsible for this. He may ask, "Why is this 'military' and 'authoritarian' organization necessary?"

He may also begin to wonder whether a school experience like this may not in fact stifle the natural expression of the child's physical and emotional needs. In such an "authoritarian" atmosphere as this the "creativity" of the child must be permanently damaged. How could anything else happen when so little room is left for free expression? He wonders if such an atmosphere doesn't contribute to a child's problems, especially those of the disturbed child.

But this is only the beginning of his education in regimentation. He finds that there is almost no end to the grouping of children. They are, he finds, tested and "labelled" and placed "indiscriminately" by age and grade, sometimes when it seems clear that they do not belong where they are placed. He thinks that by such practices the school forces children into a mold which ignores individual differences and needs. He is appalled to discover that there is even ability grouping within classes.

Now thoroughly shaken, the new school social worker is likely to react in a way similar to the extraordinary line-and-staff organization of the school. From his first interview with the superintendency staff he is aware of his involvement with a setup in which the lines of authority are clearly delineated. For the first time in his life he is now "responsible to" someone, something new in his social work experience. He remembers with nostalgia the atmosphere of the agency in which lines of authority and levels of status are far more "democratic" and relaxed. But here in the school he must turn to a "superior" whenever steps are taken which involve a mysterious new word in his lexicon, "policy."

For many social workers this atmosphere is alien to much that they have been taught. It is not in keeping with what he has been lead to believe about human individuality and freedom and what he sees as the human need for free self-expression. Ultimately it is an

atmosphere in which—keeping in mind the self-selective factors at work in choice of profession which we discussed earlier—he is not comfortable.

It is at this point that he faces his first major hurdle. He may begin to wonder if his role in the school may not be to struggle against this "regimentation." Many a school social worker has fallen into this trap and when they do they might just as well resign then and there. For if they follow such a policy and try to combat teacher and principal and the "system" they accomplish nothing and in fact end by hurting their own profession. They certainly do not help the schools.

The reaction of the new school social worker to school personnel may be more definite and more focused because it is here that preconceptions and stereotypes play a really significant role. After all the social worker is American and carries with him the culture's stereotypes. In our society the teacher is too often seen as a basically inadequate individual, one who would or should be doing something else if he had the strength, the ability or the intelligence. Part of this strangely negative culturally-imposed role for the teacher involves a low opinion of what the teacher does. Teaching is really quite easy because you control and discipline little children and teach by the book. The teacher's day is a short one—who else "gets off" by three o'clock? Furthermore teachers are over-paid for their ten-month year, with a two-month vacation to which must be added about three weeks' additional vacation time during the year.

There are similar stereotypes about the school principal. He is an administrator who controls his building, his teachers, and the children. He is a somewhat frightening authority figure. His job is of course easy, too. All he has to do is exert his authority and of course he does so far too often.

Naturally these stereotypes are overdrawn, yet if we look closely and honestly at ourselves we will find some variant of these attitudes always ready to come to the surface at any point of difference or conflict with school personnel.

What is of special interest to us, as we watch our hypothetical new school social worker, is that this is one of those points at which one's professional training, experience, and judgment get overwhelmed. The strength of one's own life experiences as a pupil together with the culture's negative (and latently hostile) stereotype of teacher and principal tend to override a more rational and mature professional

judgment. And this is strange because the social worker, more than most, should be aware of the heavy emotional and physical drain of working with people as teachers and principals do. He should know this because he is well aware that even three or four interviews can be exhausting to the agency professional.

Nevertheless his feelings at this stage are likely to be strong and they are not alleviated by the discovery that there is no niche or status position for the role "social worker" in the school hierarchy. He is likely to be irritated despite himself that this is so. He finds that he is regarded neither as teacher, principal, supervisor, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or school nurse. He is not even a custodian! To his own sense of frustration about this must be added the fact that this also bothers school personnel. He will be bewildered by the fact that school people, accustomed to clear definition of status, will test him and try to find out where he belongs and how much power of decision he has.

Here is another hurdle for the unwary. There is the teacher who may ask him to make a decision which is solely a prerogative of the principle. And there will be the occasional principal who will ask him to make a judgment or decision which is in the sole jurisdiction of the superintendency. Woe to the social worker who walks blindly into such a situation as this! And how easy it is to do, especially if he adopts the negative "buck the system" attitude noted above.

As a result of all this painful experience our social worker may begin to feel that, to school personnel, he is an outsider, even an alien. And, of course, he may feel within himself that the system is alien to him.

Now if the new school social worker fixates at this stage he will be, by definition, ineffective. Educators will not communicate their feelings and certainly will not discuss their awareness of the social workers' attitudes. They will continue to refer, since they have been told to do so. They will talk with the social worker, but the communication will be minimal. The social worker, at this point has in fact been closed off.

The result is often a pathetic and embarrassing situation: The social worker who assures you he has "wonderful rapport" with school personnel when in fact he is boxed in, is not communicating or really working with educators. I have seen many such situations. Need we add that the social work profession as a whole is damaged by this kind of naivete and–let us be frank–stupidity?

Does the social worker stay in this situation, and if so, on what terms?

*Phase II: The Beginning of Adaptation*

The social worker who survives this first painful stage, avoids its booby traps, and remains in the school as an effective working part of the team has gone through his own Gethsemane. We can make some assumptions about the professional who has survived this way. Not only has he avoided the obvious pitfalls, he is not satisfied with the straight-jacket thinking which is the logical product of stereotypes, preconceived notions, and fixed attitudes.

So our social worker is the kind who wants to learn. Because of this he examines himself and his preconceptions. He also takes a second long look at the host setting: the institutional structure of the school as well as the people who work within it.

The questions we ask here are, "How does the developing school social worker reconcile his previous professional orientation with the reality he is beginning to discover? How does he see himself working with teacher, principal, administration and specialists within the school?"

In this he may find himself painfully revising some of his most cherished notions about social work practice as he knew it in the agency setting. In the process he sees the "regimentation" and the "authoritarian atmosphere" in quite different perspective. He will make a number of discoveries about educators which are little known beyond the confines of the school.

The first is that the regimentation which was so horrifying is not, as he originally thought, the choice of educators. He will find, in part at least, it is due to an ill-informed, often hostile public which has much too much to say about the running of our schools through the negative device of budgetary review. Nor can the public's attitudes be too strictly censured for, to expect an enlightened public opinion about education when its support is derived in large part from the property tax is one of the strangest aberrations in the history of democratic government.

The most important discovery to be made about our curious educational system is that it is locked in by a public opinion that is highly resistant to change. Any educator will describe bitterly—if there is someone to listen—the attempts over the years to change the rigid system of grading and placing children, the marking system, the

archaic methods of promoting or retaining children. With rare exceptions the reaction of the public is violent and, even where such changes have been reluctantly permitted, again and again there has been a return to the status quo ante.

Seen in this open-minded way, the rigid line-and-staff organization of our schools also has an explanation rooted deep in our society's mores. If educators are reluctant to make decisions, if they prefer to turn to a "superior" for support in decision-making, if they are reticent and nervous about speaking outside their carefully defined status position, there is also a reason. Quite simply it is a defensive pattern on the part of the schools and one which is not only mandatory, but realistic. It is a defense against the extraordinary scapegoat role which our culture imposes on the schools.

Our school social worker may not know it, but ours is probably the only society in the world in which teachers and principals, even the top administrative staff, are regarded as safe and defenseless objects for the angers and hostilities of almost anyone who cares to attack them. It is something akin to ritual in American society for the schools to be blamed for whatever may have gone wrong. Is there a child guidance clinic which has not seen this regularly in the parents of children referred?

What is strange about all this is that our culture is also probably the only one in which school personnel have little or no defense against such attacks, such anger, and such irrational criticisms. Bowled over by discoveries like this the social worker may wonder who does in fact run American schools: We maintain the facade of professional administration when in fact it often appears that a combination of the property tax, a lay board of education (not always well informed on school problems!), and local town government have as much, if not more, to say about school policy than does the professional. Is it any wonder that they often appear to be on the defensive!

When the social worker understands this, he develops high respect for men and women who have the dedication to keep working under such difficult conditions. And as he comes to listen to them and to hear what they are saying he discovers that many educators question the present organization of the schools and at many levels and in many areas. Furthermore, to his surprise, he will find that they do so in terms not unlike those used by the social worker himself. It is astonishing how little this professional questioning among educators is known outside the schools. Many, and not just the "enlightened

ones," question our grouping and grading of children. Many would welcome, for example, an ungraded system in which the intense competitiveness over grades and promotion would be minimized. They are profoundly concerned that so little is being done for the "gray-scale" child—that large number of children in the borderline to low-average range who experience failure in school, who "act-out" as a consequence and end not only by under-achieving but by dropping out of school.

What becomes clear to the social worker at this stage of his development is that school administration is almost helpless to do much about this, though many efforts have been made, because "nobody is listening," not even their own boards of education. Worse, experienced teachers and principals are rarely asked to take part in the formation of policy on such issues as this. The cynic might well come to the conclusion that so long as enlightened plans for educational innovation cost money, and so long as that money must come from the property tax, they will almost by definition be opposed.

The school social worker, now beginning really to understand the school as a social system, will find that there is a very positive side to "regimentation" and control. First of all the physical welfare of children requires it. Were children permitted to give free expression to their emotional and physical energies and to run through the halls without tight discipline, there is no doubt that serious injuries would be commonplace. Of equal importance to us in our special field is that to the child from a disorganized and chaotic home background the controls provided by the school may be the only healthy and rational experience in his life. To the same child clearly defined goals may provide the stability and order which for him is therapeutic. This, too, is something we can easily forget in the one-to-one therapeutic approach of the clinic.

### The Teacher in a New Role

One of the remarkable discoveries of the social worker in this new and challenging stage of his experience is that the teacher is genuinely human. Whether the teacher is a man or a woman, functioning as father or mother surrogate, he is faced with a class of 30-odd children among whom there may be one or more disturbed, "acting-out" youngsters.

In this situation he can be very lonely indeed. Why lonely? Perhaps this can only be understood if one has faced a class of children

alone. There they all are, most of them average, well-adjusted kids, but all of them testing you. Among them, however, there are one or two or more who test in a very special way. The teacher can adapt to the average. But what does he do about the acting-out, disturbed child, or the child with very poor self-image—the child he knows is a kind of scapegoat for the other children? The loneliness comes from the fact that there is no one with whom he can share the problem, and ultimately very little he can do to help this child. As a result he experiences an overwhelming sense of frustration. Some teachers experience more—despair and depression about this situation. Isn't it understandable that under these circumstances they sometimes "give up" on the child? After all what else can they do?

The social worker who has heard the sarcastic, caustic, and apparently destructive comments about a child in the teacher's room, learns that such comments are not always as "punitive" as he thinks. Rather they are an expression of the teacher's inability to do anything concrete to help that particular child.

In this the unfulfilled expectations in referrals to agencies is highly significant. Superficially there is the sense that "something has been done," but in fact the situation remains the same. The child is still there, his behavior unchanged. And, whether or not the child is in treatment, the teacher still faces him and has to work out some techniques for dealing with him.

It is at this point that the developing social worker discovers how he can play a new and significant role. If he shares these feelings with the teacher and assumes part of the responsibility he will meet a warm and grateful response from the teacher. The teacher, in turn, discovers that he is no longer alone with his problems in the class. There comes, in this process, the sense to both that with sharing and working out an understanding of the child and possible alternatives in handling him, the skills and interests and commitments of both are mobilized. The social worker finds a specially rewarding role here for when he acts as liaison with the home which is often fractious and litigation-minded, much of the pressure that has existed is reduced. Even if very little concrete change is noted in the disturbed child as a result of this collaboration, the effect on teacher morale of sharing the burden is considerable. To this extent it is bound to help the child in the long run. Needless to say, the same situation adds a new dimension to the professional experience of the social worker.

## Specialized School Personnel

With specialized teaching personnel including the guidance counselors and nurses the problem of communication is quite different from that with the teacher and administrator. The reason is that reading and speech specialists, psychologists, guidance counselors and nurses deal with the child on a one-to-one basis and because of this there is the same difference in seeing the child as there is, noted above, between the agency and the school. For this reason specialized personnel may be more sensitive or resistant to the social work view of behavior and development, than teachers precisely because they and we share this one-to-one kind of relationship. It will help us in this context to remember that they are educators and have defined status in the hierarchy. We don't. It is human and understandable for them to ask what we as social workers can contribute that they can't.

Part of the problem here is that their stereotype (as is true probably of all school personnel) of the term" social worker" is that of an untrained person in welfare or other related services. It is worthwhile to keep in mind constantly that of all those who in the United States call themselves "social workers" possibly not more than 20 to 25 per cent are in fact professionally trained. The result is that the educator has had little contact with the trained and experienced social work professional. It is in this context that a very difficult problem emerges for us, namely, how do we communicate what our training and experience represent without condescension and above all without invidious comparisons?

This is something we need to look at closely and not least with specialized personnel in the schools. One possible role that we may play to correct this is to share our insights, yet at the same time respect others' point of view. We should also work with them toward an agreement to use resources well and to avoid overlapping of functions. It is my belief that so long as the social worker and specialized school personnel are left to work this out themselves the status problems remain at a minimum.

There is one notion that we must remove from our traditional thinking in the mental health professions. This is that *only* highly trained professionals in psychiatry, clinical psychology or social work can help. So long as we are convinced of this we will not communicate or get along with school personnel, specialized or not. We must keep in the forefront of our thought that there are almost an infinite variety

of helping people in the community, not least in the schools and that therapy has many, many facets. The point is we can only utilize these tremendous resources so long as we recognize them as fully equal members of the professional team.

*Phase III: The Problem of Professional Identification*

The school social worker in this third phase of his experience has discarded his previous stereotypes and misconceptions about the school and school personnel. He may find that far from having a negative attitude towards teachers and principals, he now experiences anger over the way the schools and school people are treated by the public, not least the taxpayer who is represented on boards of education and especially in local government. He has seen at first hand the way in which the individual taxpayer talks negatively and destructively about schools and what the schools are trying to do. He now understands and deplores the scapegoat role of the school in our society. He will be troubled by the isolation of the agencies from the school and the resistance on the part of many agency social workers to direct communication with the school. He may discover that within his own profession he has low status as against the "psychiatric social worker" in the clinic and precisely because he is associated with the schools.

Finally, he will realize the significance of the fact that he no longer has the supporting and learning experience derived from supervision and case conferences which is a built-in characteristic of the agency.

The questions which he must face at this point are:

First, "Is he in danger of losing his professional identity as a social work professional?

Second, "Is he tending to identify with educators and their point of view and their problems?"

Third, "Is he becoming defensive about his educational colleagues?"

Which in turn poses a fourth question, "How can he be a true member of the school team yet retain the professional ideals, standards and identification which he worked so hard to attain?"

Needless to say, no more painful questions can confront any professional than these, and we must face them squarely and frankly if we are to realize the promise which is inherent in school social work.

The problem of identity may focus most clearly in his relations with school personnel. The dangers for the school social worker at this point are twofold. He may want to undo the generally fuzzy, somewhat

negative, often uncomplimentary stereotype of the social worker which he will find in the minds of his educational colleagues. He cannot but be aware of the fact that this stereotype is widely held in the population as a whole. It is one thing to be able to take such stereotypes in stride. It is another to try to undo them by agreeing with them. When he does the latter he loses his stature and dignity as a social work professional.

Another and closely related danger is in part a product of the stress and chaos of his function. He may find it almost impossible to practice case work as his training and experience taught him to do. This together with his problems in referrals and communications with agency professionals, may push him toward over-identification with teachers and principals to the point where he is thinking more like an educator than a social worker.

In addition to this he faces a number of professional problems and it may be well for us to look at these in detail.

First of all, school social work is, as we all know, a protective service and tends in most cases to be a short-term service. While this may not raise questions about case work, it does raise questions about how it is to be used. What I have in mind here is that the functions of the school social worker are so multiple and so varied that it is more difficult for him than for his professional colleagues in the agencies to keep the aims and method of case work clearly in focus. Above all it is all too easy to lose sight of process in this kind of situation. There is perhaps no greater threat to professional identity for the social worker than to be unable to carry a client through to termination, and this is one of the real difficulties we face in school social work.

Naturally this kind of problem is related to the very complicated one of case load. As his relations with school personnel become more cordial, their dependence on him becomes more pronounced, and for the social worker it becomes increasingly more difficult to say "no" to the harried, overwrought teacher and principal who do need help with a child and/or his family. Furthermore there is a professional commitment here that makes the problem more difficult, namely, that the time to offer help is at the moment of crisis.

The threat to his professional practice lies at this point in the dilution of his training and his experience. He is already overloaded and stretched to the limit, finds it very difficult to say "no", and cannot deny his services to those who need them. It is at this point

that the difference between the school as a host setting and the agency is most at variance. As we all know there have been endless discussions about this question of case load in school social work but I have yet to see a sensible, practical, workable formula for keeping case loads within manageable limits. There is the further difficulty that cases somehow rarely get closed unless the child moves.

As one experienced school social worker put it "School social work is the untidiest, most disorganized of social work functions."

So far as the school is concerned we know that for school personnel it is difficult to understand what we mean by case load because in one sense a limitation of the number of cases constitutes a kind of withdrawal of service, even rejection. It is one of those things that is most difficult for us to communicate.

Our dilemma then is this: The better the social worker is, both in relating to his hosts and as a helping person, the greater the demand for his services, the more difficult it is to say "no." But the more cases he takes on the less effective he will be.

There are still further complications in this situation involving case load. When we try to define client we must ask ourselves, "Is it to be both the child and his parents, plus a consultation function with teacher and principal?"

If so, it is obvious that the school social worker can handle so few "cases" as to be relatively ineffective in terms of numbers in the school system as a whole. One solution that some school social workers have chosen, one which I believe to be at best questionable, is to work almost solely with children. The fact is that our professional training and experience teaches us beyond question that the urgent problem is in the home. By treating the child we may be treating a symptom, not the basic problem itself.

Furthermore if we treat the child and do not maintain close relationships with teaching staff we will be making the same mistake that many clinics do; what we accomplish will not be supported and reinforced in the classroom. It should be added that this is a problem that guidance counselors in high schools are all too familiar with.

The third professional problem for the school social worker is to be found in his relations with agencies and other helping services. Harried, pushed, under pressure, feeling himself stretched too thin, a school social worker may well find the silence of agencies and clinics about a referred child difficult to accept. He may find it neces-

sary to spend precious time on the phone, or writing to get some kind of picture from the agency about the treatment program and prognosis, as well as stage of treatment.

This inadequate communication between agencies and the professional in the field has already been referred to. It is very easy to develop a kind of professional paranoia about it. For example, in my own community my staff now has some 56 cases, active with agencies, clinics, hospitals or private practitioners. I know very well that I spend too much time trying to arrange conferences or to get some word from these resources. In fact I have found it necessary to assign part of the time of a staff member to follow up these referrals. What can all too easily happen to us in periods of stress and strain, however, is to experience irritation, even anger, over this silence, and almost a sense of rejection by the agencies. What we must remember at all times is that these people are our professional colleagues and we must maintain a professional discourse with them. Not to do so is to arrogate to ourselves judgments about them we have no right to make.

These are but a few of the professional problems we face. Were we to look for others the list would be formidable.

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How then do we maintain our professional integrity and our identity in this hurly-burly of school social work? Our field is too new and our discussions among ourselves over policy and practice too limited to make possible at this stage any clear-cut answers. Furthermore, the difficulty of answering this question is compounded by the fact that we are so few in number and our status so ill-defined. It may be, therefore, that one of our first tasks is to define in simple, clear-cut terms what we can and cannot do within the school system. Though we have made several such attempts none of them somehow are stated in terms which communicate readily to colleagues in the other disciplines.

In terms of case load it may be that we shall need to work toward realistic appraisal in terms of differential diagnosis of who our client is: whether we are to focus on the child, on parents or on consultation. We cannot obviously do all three and remain effective. One possible answer here is that we should maintain a small case load which we can work through to termination, but that our major focus be on consultation and effective referrals.

Perhaps most important of all, however, we cannot maintain our

professional identity without the foundation of case work training and practice, namely, supervision and on-going inservice training. We have said a good deal about supervision and are rather sensitive about the accusation that it represents a kind of professional dependency relationship. It may well be that in the agency we need less of it than is often provided. In the field, on the front line as we are in school social work, however, it is absolutely essential. I need hardly tell you that the question here is how do we provide it? The problem is urgent and should be approached as top priority because I think all of us will recognize that to work alone, without supervision, in the high-pressure atmosphere of the school, can, over a period of time, become a real threat to our professional identity.

Finally we must read in our field and certainly above all, write about it. What we write about, however, must not be in the stilted language so often found in our professional literature. I cannot resist the temptation to add my own perplexity here. Why is it that while we in social work have the richest of all possible human resources for creative expression that can be imagined, our professional writing seems trapped in a kind of ritualistic deference to sociology? It may be we have gone down this somewhat arid road in part because of the prestige of science and the consequent lack of prestige of the so-called "subjective" professions.

It is about time, however, that we began writing articles and books which portray what we do as well as our feeling and our sensitivity for the human beings that we help. In these terms, it seems to me that neither sociological theory nor sociological research methods have any place in a field as subjective as ours must be. In the last analysis we might well ask ourselves why are we ashamed to be subjective?

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The broadground which has been covered here makes summary difficult but certain points seem to stand out.

First of all, we will agree that ours is perhaps one of the most exciting areas of specialization in the social profession because our focus is preventive.

Second, if we are uncertain and appear to be floundering at times it may be due in part to the newness of the field, but it is also due to the lack of definition of our role and function.

Finally, part of our problem, perhaps more pressing in school social work than in any other area of the profession is the difficulty

of maintaining our professional point of view, our identity, in a host setting which can easily pull us away from the established channels of practice as it is known in the agency.

We would all agree that we cannot afford to be pulled apart by these forces. Certainly, we can be members of a genuinely democratic, equal educational mental health team, yet keep our point of view. We would all share in the fervent hope that other conferences like this one will help clarify the issues and focus our professional purpose.

# Factors Which Affect a Model for School Social Work Practice

*by Jerry L. Kelley*

I would like to suggest several models, types of models, or models of emphasis, and then also suggest some ways in which one might examine the factors which would lead toward the establishment of the best for your own school system. But before we look at these factors it might be well to review very briefly what underlies the employment of social workers in the schools.

Hyrum Smith, in talking about the pupil personnel services, said that as early as 75 A.D. Quintilian, one of the first publicly-paid teachers, recognized individual differences and urged the teachers of his day to note that, "As narrow-necked vessels reject a great quantity of the liquid that is poured upon them, but are filled by that which flows or is poured into them by degrees, so it is for us to ascertain how much the minds of boys can receive; since what is too much for their grasp of intellect will not enter their minds as not being sufficiently expanded to admit it."[1]

This shows us that the concept and recognition of individual differences has been long held but not necessarily long employed, and that as we have learned more about human beings and how they grow, we have discovered what might have been implicit in this statement by Quintilian that social, emotional readiness, and many other factors are some of the determinants of what the size of the neck of the vessel is. And social workers, then, presumably, have some area of contribution in respect to this consideration. They are not the only ones by any means, but this is one of the primary bases for the rationale that social workers have something to contribute to schools, to enable students to be better able to partake of what is already being offered to them in the educational enterprise.

The social worker places a strong emphasis in the helping process, on the use of a relationship. Many people describe the essence of social case work as "the relationship"—that without this nothing occurs. And this is what social workers are taught to establish and use. They have what we hope is a very highly-developed capacity to relate to other people appropriately on a professional level.

[1]Smith, Hyrum M., *School Social Work, A Service of Schools*, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964. Page 17.

Most of all they must be able to identify with the client(s), to empathize, to know how they feel as well as understanding how they think. In the school then, he helps the other personnel to know more fully the level and kind of feelings the child and/or his parents have, as well as helping these clients through the relationship with them.

### We Are Now Ready for a Little Model Building

In any new program involving a single social worker, the model most likely established might be called a *generalist* model, because specialization evolves as staff numbers increase. The social worker has to try to fit in, in a lot of different ways, to a variety of variables. (The same holds true of other different professions being inaugurated in the schools.) So the social worker, if he is the first one in his system, is to a substantial extent, necessarily a generalist. He cannot, until he knows, or until other things happen, specialize as much as he might later. One limitation to this generalist hypothesis exists when one is assigned to work within, say, the Title I framework, which more narrowly circumscribes the arena of service. Nonetheless, in the beginning, the social worker will be more of a generalist than he will later.

The most traditional and most written-about model in school social work practice is the *direct service* model. This is the school social worker who plies his practitioner trade as an individual helping, problem-solving person. Most of the time this has been in case work. That is, he works in a one-to-one relationship with children and

*Jerry L. Kelley discussion group*

with parents in an attempt to help them resolve the problems that are impeding the child's progress in school. He works collaboratively with everybody else—with the teachers, the principals, the other pupil personnel specialists, etc. This is a relatively limited delivery system. That is, the service population is more restricted under the direct service model than under other models. The worker, if he is spending a substantial amount of time with individual cases, is not going to have as much time for affecting, indirectly, other students and parents. When this model is being applied I think, if at all possible, the school social worker should be attached only to one school. He ought to be built into the system of that particular school to the extent that this can be done. He should be viewed as a full-time employee of that particular school. This integral assignment is often difficult to attain, but it is a desirable goal for several reasons. One is that the social worker can become fully knowledgeable about what is going on in this particular educational institution. He is a responsible part of the whole process. This is a great advantage to him and to his potential effectiveness. It also helps him to be accepted by the other people.

Finally, and this is a major advantage in most communities, the school is looked upon as a much more accepted social institution to turn to for help than agencies are. Many people have a generally positive attitude toward schools, and are fairly well accustomed to approaching schools. Hence they are much more willing to accept help that is offered to them directly within the school.

A second kind of model which is beginning to emerge clearly, and has hardly been tapped in terms of the potential, is the *team leader* model. These are two ways of viewing the team leadership. One is in respect to existing types of school personnel and the other is in respect to new types of personnel. This focus will be on the latter (the new types) because that is where the team leadership of the social worker is likely to be visible. But in respect to the former, the team leader role with existing personnel, the social worker should share in the team leadership, viewing all of the personnel in the school as the team.

Everyone agrees the team concept is desirable. But few times is it spelled out as to what is meant by this concept. Unfortunately, in many school systems, the team really operates as a *relay team,* wherein the child with the difficulty is the baton. He is passed from helping person to helping person sometimes in the same office on consecutive or alternate hours or days. Sometimes the very building tends

to almost rule out the possibility of concurrent team operation, because the various specialized people may have to occupy the same space on different days or different hours in the same day. Hence the psychologist cannot possibly talk in that building with the social worker or the guidance counselor, or maybe not even the teacher, because the space scheduling is prohibitive. So quite often, the child gets caught up in this sort of relay team operation.

There is another concept or dimension of the *fixed team*. That is, there are some school systems that say there should be a team of pupil personnel specialists who, perhaps, are attached together to one set of schools and operate pretty well concurrently in respect to all referrals. The fixed team provided for a very stable operation with clear channels of communication and well delineated roles. The leadership of this team may be a rotating one, including periodically, the social worker.

My personal preference, however, is for the *flexible* team. This means that the team which is called into operation at any point is the one that has relevance for that particular child. It may include the teacher and the principal, not just the pupil personnel specialist and its compositive changes, apropos of the situation. These people are the ones who are central to the child's welfare. (Needless to say, parents may be viewed as team workers also, inclusive, however crucial, but theirs is a different consideration.) The flexible school team is one which shifts each time there is a new situation with a new child, new teacher, or whatever it may be. It is not fixed. In terms of the leadership role, at least the following may be relevant: What is the nature of the problem, i.e. which professional base might have the most pertinence? What is the nature of the established relationships, i.e. who knows the child best and can work with him most effective? Who has the most appropriate individual competence, i.e. works best with this kind of situation? Finally, who has time to devote as needed.

The determination of respective responsibilities in relation to a given child will vary, including the responsibility of team leadership. The social worker, at one point in time, may be the team leader, at another point, the principal, the nurse, the teacher, the psychologist, the guidance counselor; or the speech correctionist may be the team leader because that person is more central.

Now the other part of the team model which is just beginning to emerge is the leadership in respect to new or as yet unborn personnel

such as social work associates, or social work aides, or community aides, or lay workers, or volunteers, who are or may be working in the schools. As these new para-social work professions get established, the social worker becomes logically the teacher, supervisor and leader of this team.

Next is the *consultation* model. One definition of consultation, by Horace Lundberg, is: "Consultation is the provision of professional knowledge, judgment, and suggestions regarding a situation in professional practice at the request of or with the concurrence of the consultee. The fully continuing responsibility for the practice situation, including the use to be made of the consultant's information and recommendations, remains with the consultee."[1] This, basically, is a good definition and one that we often tend to forget in our practice. We tend to sometimes go beyond our role and inject ourselves directly or indirectly into a kind of supervisory or guiding role when we should remember that we really are consultants and the person with whom we are consulting is free to make whatever use he wishes, or no use at all, of what we are suggesting.

Within the consultation model there are at least several potential dimensions. One is consultation regarding a specific child. A teacher or someone else in the school system, but usually the teacher, would approach the social worker and say, "I am having trouble with this child, don't understand him, or he is acting strangely, or whatever, and can I talk to you about this?" This does not necessarily mean that there is going to be a referral. The teacher at this point feels that she may need some additional perspective to help the child herself. There can be then consultation regarding the situation. The social worker may not be the only person that a teacher might consult, but the social worker is one of the potential consultants.

Then there can be consultation regarding children and parents in general. This is more of a training type of consultation. The social worker has a different kind of perspective, and perhaps, in general, more knowledge about human development in the broad sense than the average teacher would. The social worker is also likely to be more qualified than others as a consultant about the community. As a generalization, he should know more about the organized social resources, the agencies, etc., in the community than other people.

We tend to talk about this type of consultation in a somewhat

[1]Lundberg, Horace W., "Obtaining Improved Coordination and Collaboration in Pupil Personnel Activities." Unpublished paper, 1962.

unilateral fashion. Social workers can be consultees as well as consultants. The school social worker should make maximum use of other school personnel to help him as well as vice versa.

These, both the team leader and the consultation models, do provide a broader delivery system base than the direct service model. That is, the social worker by serving in these capacities does substantially broaden his area of influence.

Probably the broadest of all delivery systems is the *community organization* model. Not only may any social worker be helpful to the school in a community organization (C.O.) role but a few specialists in C.O. are being employed by school systems to practice C.O. exclusively.

*(C.O. really refers to the process of helping the social system, rather than the client, through the identification of social needs, the planning to meet them, and the implementation of these plans. In Seattle, Washington, for example, a prominent C.O. social worker has just been employed as coordinator of intergroup relations. He reports directly to the superintendent.)*

Potential C.O. use is great in respect to the development of schools as community centers. The school has, in some eyes, opportunities and responsibilities for providing much more than the traditional eight or so hours per day of education experience for children. In New Haven, Connecticut, for instance, here is the description of their defined functions:

"On August 27, 1962, the New Haven Board of Education adopted the community school policy. In doing so, it clearly defined the function of the community school: (1) as an educational center—where children and adults have the opportunities for study and learning; (2) as a neighborhood community center—where citizens of all ages may take part in such things as sports, physical fitness programs, informal recreation, arts and crafts classes, civic meetings and other similar leisure time activities; (3) as a center of community services—where individuals and families may obtain health services, counseling services, legal aid, employment services, and the like; and (4) as an important center of neighborhood or community life—the idea being that the school will serve as the institutional agency which will assist citizens in the study and solution of significant neighborhood problems."[1]

This is just one design. It is fairly recent as a program and its

[1]From a brochure issued by the New Haven, Connecticut Public Schools.

effectiveness is still to be proved. But they have succeeded in financing a lot of programs that they would not have been able to otherwise. The point here is not to advocate this particular plan but to advocate this kind of creative thinking—that social work, in part, has a responsibility to initiate ideas of this kind—to look at the total potentials that we could bring to bear individually and as a system on behalf of the kids, the parents, and the whole community.

With the possibility of these models, in some variety, in mind, what does the new social worker in the school do to determine what kind of model he wants. He really engages himself in a community organization process. He should assess and evaluate, by deliberately casing the community, casing the school as a social system, casing the specific school, and hopefully, casing himself. He makes a professional estimate of what is around him and within him that will help determine how he should function. One of the prime ingredients for any professional functioning is purposeful and intentional action, based on knowledge, values, and purposes which are consciously applied. In other words, the social worker should call upon his community organization background to make a conscious assessment initially, and to continue doing so as the program (s) develop. He does not just do this unilaterally, he involves everyone else he can, meaningfully, in making this assessment with him.

*Case the community.* He needs to find out what this community is like. Who are the people in the district? What is their social-economic level? How old are they? What is the racial composition? He needs to know, especially, what attitude the community has towards the school. What are the forces in effect here and how do they affect the social worker? In the beginning particularly, he should take the time to visit, to learn, to build relationships and find out about the community.

*Case the system.* Who are the members of the board? What do they want? Who are the administrative staff? Who are the people that make the decisions on the administrative policy level? How does the social worker relate to them? What is the administrative structure of the whole system? Where is the power? And where does he fit into this? Needless to say, he needs to understand well what the other pupil personnel services are and how he relates to them. To whom is he going to be responsible and why? Where does he focus in terms of his practice? Which model?

But with this, as far as it is administratively possible, the social

worker should still reserve the right to define his own role. He is a consultee in a sense, as he gets information, but his best social work function *per se,* within this system, should be determined by the social worker.

Next he needs to decide at what level he will start. Will he work at the preschool level, kindergarten, first grade, later primary level, junior high, or high school? This decision should be made most consciously. From a preventive standpoint, the earlier he starts the better, other things being equal. But there are a lot of variables. He needs to decide how many schools he is going to cover. And this is a decision area in which the social worker ought to be clearly heard. Unless his job is previously viewed as the consultant or C.O. model, he should try to avoid the trap of being responsible to too many schools hence compromising the quality of the direct service model. If too many schools are served, the quality of his work is sacrificed.

*Case the school.* This applies especially to the direct service model, and is vitally important. He should find out what the working arrangements are in the building. Who is the principal? What does he believe in? What kind of climate does he engender? How do the teachers view the social workers coming into the school? Are they threatened by it; are they anxious? Find out about this. Find out who the teacher leaders are from the principal, or from some other source and relate to them as quickly as possible. There is nothing unethical about establishing priorities of relationship. This is good, thoughtful practice of community organization.

Identifying the leadership group is desirable so the social worker can immediately become involved with these people. He enhances his chances of being quickly able to demonstrate his competence, as well as to further clarify the practice emphases (models) appropriate for that school. He also needs to find out who the other specialists are within the school. Who are the pupil personnel people, the special teachers, and the other source personnel available to him?

Finally, *case himself.* He needs to look as honestly as he can at his own attitudes toward school. Does he have stereotyped notions of what principals and teachers are? He should look at and reflect upon his own earlier educational experiences. How have these resulted in his now being motivated to enter into a school system? No one could be expected to have been totally positively motivated. But as with all professional behavior it is hoped that he becomes conscious of these dimensions in order to better and purposefully make use of them.

As part of casing himself, he should look at what I like to call the charismatic dimension. Charism or charisma really means "spiritual gift." In its purest form it relates to the capacity that very few people have, out of their own spiritual goodness, to lead others. We think, of course, of such people as Jesus Christ and Mohandas Gandhi. Often, on the contemporary scene, natural leadership is referred to as charismatic. Jack Kennedy was frequently described in this fashion. I like to extend this concept of charism to define the uniqueness of each individual human being in relationship to others. Each of us has within himself a constellation of qualities—a charismatic constellation—which enables him to influence others, in the best sense of this word.

The social worker needs to know what his personal strengths and weaknesses are. What kind of human being is he? For example, what are his attitudes towards children? What kinds of children or what ages does he work with best? For example, I know that I am much more comfortable with adolescent boys and girls or young adults than I am with younger children. I place heavy reliance upon verbal communication, and I tend both to think less of people who are not facile with the use of words, and to feel less able to be of help to them. Therefore, with younger children who are not yet so verbal, I find myself less well-equipped. For many the reverse might be true. Particularly, I believe, most women have a much greater aptitude for non-verbal communication, as with younger children.

What does he think about working with parents? Does he like to do this? Are there certain kinds of adults that he likes better than others? Supposing he finds someone that appears to be very much like himself in attitude, and therefore attracted very much to him or her. How does this affect his practice? Can he remain as objective as he needs to be? Does he run the risk of over-identification?

He should ask himself also whether he has an aptitude for doing more of the community organization kind of work. Maybe he enjoys giving speeches and helping organize resources in the community. Perhaps, on the other hand, he much prefers the more clinical dimensions of social work practice, and gravitiates toward a one-to-one relationship or a one-to-group relationship, in a more direct service role. He must not only know himself in terms of his charismatic constellation, but be aware of his own methodological competence. Should he, for example, be trying to do some work with groups as things evolve even though that is not his greatest area of security?

A vital additional component to all that has been stated before is the component of research. This should be an underlying part of the social worker's awareness if not part of his practice; although the latter is desirable virtually to the point of necessity. He does not have to be a highly skilled researcher. But he should be alert to the opportunity for study of his own practice, of other practices in the school, of the effectiveness of service, and of the needs of children. Enough so, so that some kind of action research can be undertaken—if not by him, by those within the school system or outside of it who have the specific research competence called for.

The school social worker does then, in the course of beginning, need to evaluate all of these factors. He should have in mind a combination of models or a more singular model which may be most promising. He engages in the community organization process in the conduct of his study and assessment—which I have called "casing"— then he applies this knowledge consciously and purposefully—the mark of the professional.

This process is not a one-shot phenomenon. It continues, and should be a built-in method of procedure no matter how long he works with any particular school or school system. He therefore continues to case the community, case the system, case the school, and case himself.

Finally, as Sergeant Preston, of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in the Yukon, would say to his faithful Husky, "Well, King, this case is closed."

# The Social Worker As a Link Between School, Home, and Community

*by Lawrence Merl*

There is always the ever-present potential of danger or risk in being the last of several speakers on a general topic or theme at a panel presentation or institute. The risk is even greater when the last speech or paper is written before one has heard or read the preceding presentations. Will Mr. Hoyt ("The School As a Social Institution and Setting for Social Work Practice") or Mr. Kelley ("Factors Which Affect a Model for School Work Practice") have stolen my thunder—or, worse yet, will I be repeating or duplicating material they have presented and the institute participants have already discussed to some degree during the previous days? If my fears when writing this paper now have proven to be real rather than imaginary, I offer my sympathy to you the listeners. I also ask your indulgence.

Be all that as it may, I will more-or-less follow the very generous and excellent suggestions for the content and focus of this paper which Mr. Pool provided me. His suggestions and directions left me much freedom—freedom to highlight issues and raise questions without the obligation or compulsion to provide all the answers. What more could one ask – what could be more fun – than to be the devil's advocate or the burr under the saddle – and let the chips fall where they may.

In this presentation, I will try to stay away from, as much as possible, what are usually considered to be direct services to individual and small groups of children and their parents. I will also try to refrain from focusing on the usual kinds of collaborative efforts and relationships with school personnel, social agencies, and mental health in private practice in the community. It probably will not be possible for me to keep from including some aspects or consultation and the consultative process. The focus will be on indirect services which the school worker or visiting teacher may or should provide, initiate, stimulate, or support within the framework of the functions and responsibilities of his position and within his commitment as a professional person. These indirect services reside in the interrelated and interlocking areas of prevention, community organization, and social action.

Prevention, community organization, and social action are to be considered along with and in addition to what have been called the traditional functions and responsibilities of school social work. They are not to replace or always be substitutes for direct and individualized services to individuals and small groups of children and their parents, collaboration with a variety or school and community personnel, consultation regarding specified individuals and situations, and the administrative component of school social work. Under certain situations and with certain school social work or visiting teacher positions, these kinds of functions, roles and responsibilities may be logically separated – but this is not my intent today. My intent is to focus on selected components of practice which could or should be integral parts of school social work practice *per se.* These parts of practice may not be easy to understand, accept, and implement. These parts may not be within current definitions and expectations of your practice. Visiting teachers and school social workers may not have had much formal education or much experience directed toward fulfilling these kinds of functions. School policies, educational practitioners and administrators, and community leaders may not always encourage and readily support the carrying out of what I consider to be important and necessary components of visiting teacher or school social work practice. However, what profession and which professional person always looks for the easy way, the tried and proven approach, and the unthreatening mode of practice?

Let us start with several of my assumptions as a basis or spring-

*Lawrence Merl discussion group*

board for the remainder of the paper. These assumptions may be challenged, discussed, and then accepted or rejected in part or totally.

The school is a required social institution. As such, it belongs to society. The school's primary reason for being is to provide a very broad range of educational and educationally related services to all its constituents – the persons, directly or indirectly, who want, need, are required to use, are eligible for, consume the products of, suffer the consequences of, and pay for the services provided by the schools. The school system or school building carries responsibilities which extend far beyond the geographical boundary in which it is located. The school, with its governing body, administrators, and practitioners, carries a responsibility not only to reflect the educational needs and aspirations of its constituents and society but also has the responsibility to provide leadership, initiative and programs which will anticipate future needs and aspirations. The constituents of the school have the right, the privilege and the responsibility to participate in and influence (but not dictate) objectives, plans and programs of the school. As a social institution, the school must relate to, interact with, and be influenced by other social institutions – specifically the home or family and that constellation of institutions I will call the community.

If, by and large, these assumptions are logical and correct, how does the school go about beginning to tackle and fulfill the tremendously varied and complex legal and societal expectations and demands implied or stated in the above assumptions? Quite obviously, there is no single way to proceed, and no one person, position, or profession in the school carries single responsibility. If the grand mission of the school is to be carried out with a significant degree of success, all resources inside and out of the school must be used creatively and effectively.

Dr. Lawrence G. Derthick, former commissioner of the United States Office of Education, currently assistant executive secretary of the National Education Association, has on more than one occasion given speeches entitled "The Missing Link." In these instances he was referring to the lack of school social work as a missing link in the administrative program. For this institute and this paper, we might refer to the "missing link" or "weak link" as the lack of or the weakness of the linkage between home, school, and community. The school social worker or visiting teacher who uses himself and his knowledge and skill appropriately and aggressively can be a strong link between

home, school, and community – and can be of great impact in the school feeling the throb of the community pulse, reaching out rather than waiting to be sought, and working with home and community rather than struggling with unknown or misunderstood odds. The visiting teacher or school social worker can not do this alone – he must not try to take unilateral action. By the same token, the school can not bring about changes alone – the home and the community have their parts in this also.

In an article published several years ago in *Social Work*, John Nebo said, "School social workers have been guilty, along with other disciplines working in the school, of 'talking among themselves.'" He was referring primarily to the lack of communication between the social worker and other pupil personnel services workers. If the visiting teacher or school social worker is to be the link we are talking about, not only must he communicate and interact with all kinds and levels of school personnel but he must have similar communication, interaction, and relationships with a multitude of lay and professional persons in the community – persons in and out of the power structure; leaders, potential leaders and followers; the active and the passive; the positive and the negative; the rich, poor and the in-between; the churched and the unchurched – contact along horizontal and vertical cross-sectional lines throughout the community.

The visiting teacher or social worker, if he is to be engaged in prevention, community organization, and social action, can not move only from school building-to-school building or from one hall or desk or telephone to another. He needs to go where the problems, needs, people, and possible solutions are or might be found. He must reach out – and not wait to be sought out. The worker who sits behind the sometimes frightening and unpenetrable walls of a school building may wind up with a sore fanny and isolated from the knowledge of reality as it exists in the out-of-school real world – the real world of poverty; disadvantaged children and parents; delinquency; powerless people without representation or champions; people who want better opportunities for themselves and their children but, for one or multiple reasons, can not or will not take beginning, faltering steps to achieve those opportunities; the real world of ignorance; unemployment or underemployment; power blocks; and political machinations. To one degree or the other, many aspects of this out-of-school real world are present in the neighborhoods surrounding the elementary and secondary schools which school social workers and visiting teachers serve.

Perhaps as never before since the very early days of visiting teacher or school social work services at the beginning of the 20th century, the time is ripest now for visiting teachers and school social workers to be influential in being of assistance to schools and school-related citizens. This assistance can be on the one-to-one and the one-to-group basis but, more important to the focus of this paper, also on a much broader basis – not the rifle but the shot gun approach, not the individualized but the social problems approach, and not the micro but macro intervention.

Recent and proposed federal legislation (on poverty, civil rights, elementary and secondary education, special education, higher education, juvenile delinquency and crime, housing, demonstration cities, beautification, etc) all point to the social problems approach and environmental change. Statements made and action taken by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Harold Howe, Commissioner of Education, attest to the readiness of education and welfare administrators on the federal level to support new roles and functions for educators and pupil personnel workers. Educationists in state department of education, local school districts, and colleges of education seem to be giving more emphasis to the social and behavioral sciences whereas the natural sciences and mathematics were supreme for a period of time recently.

Social work educators and schools of social work are taking hard looks at, advocating and implementing revised and new curricula for the preparation of students for social work practice after earning the bachelor's and master's degrees. On the graduate level in social work education, courses and sequences in social policies and programs, administration and community organization are taking on new significance and importance. The National Association of Social Workers at the national and chapter levels is becoming more social problems focused, community minded, and action oriented. The two professions with which visiting teachers and school social workers are most identified, social work and education, are more receptive and supportive of school, social workers becoming stronger and more effective links between home, school, and community.

Now, to be more specific, highlight some issues, and raise some questions regarding the non-clinical or change agent or indirect service components of the role of the visiting teacher or school social worker. Earlier in the paper I spoke of prevention, community organization and social action. These aspects of the school social worker's or

visiting teacher's position are not easily separated or differentiated. To a certain extent they are interrelated parts or steps in a process – and I do not have the time, knowledge or ability to cope with the separate parts or the process in an adequate manner. However, as a beginning, let us have a look at prevention.

A discussion of prevention (and if at all possible, we should intervene at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels) leads us into a basic issue or question. Is school social work or the visiting teacher a residual or institutionalized service? Is it restorative or habilitative? Or, at this time, does the visiting teacher or school work service include some of each of the four? These services are residual and restorative if the workers are called upon to try to help children, either directly or indirectly, to become functionally adequate after social functioning has already broken down. School social work and visiting teacher services are institutionalized and habilitative if the workers are an integral part of the total and ongoing educational program and if they provide preventive services and make a significant contribution in helping school children to equip themselves to function as well as possible in school and society.

I do hope that we are moving toward, or at least working in the direction of moving toward, being an institutionalized and habilitative service or instrument. For too long school social workers or visiting teachers and other school personnel have appeared to be content to wait until children's unmet needs cry for help – they cry for help in ways children have of expressing their problems and disadvantages in school, home, and community. You have heard these cries – you have heard them through children's expressed and demonstrated attitudes, behaviors, and lack of achievement. These cries for help – these symptoms and manifestations – all influence the child as a learner. Learning and education are too important; non-productive and underproductive people are a waste of manpower; treatment is necessary and will continue to be so; but prevention saves human suffering, time, and money. The social and behavioral sciences plus professional skills have provided us with the knowledge and ability to do more than we are now doing. School social workers and visiting teachers can do more than they are now doing and will learn to do even more if they expect more of themselves – and if others expect and allow them to provide more preventive and habilitative services.

Headstart might be considered one of the few educationally related programs of a preventive nature. It is considered to be one of the

most effective and successful of the new federally financed poverty-educational programs. As a preschool program, does it start soon enough? Should it include more than disadvantaged and deprived children as now defined? Are its advantages lost if school systems do not have kindergartens? Are its advantages partially lost if there are not educational and educationally related services provided as long as the children need them throughout their school years? Are the advantages as great or as lasting unless the children's parents, homes, and environments have opportunities to change along with the children?

Educators and social workers have learned in some places that parents of disadvantaged children of Headstart age have not rushed to the schools or centers to enroll their children. The social workers and visiting teachers have also found that when they reached out to these parents by going to their homes parents reacted in various ways – sometimes with distrust, sometimes with hostility and sometimes with appreciation for the interest and concern a representative of the school was, maybe for the first time, showing them and their child. One of the most rewarding experiences for the school social workers and the mothers of the Headstart children has been the "mothers groups" which met regularly while the children were in the Headstart program. In some instances child care was provided for the younger children so the mothers were freed for a short time of mothering responsibilities.

The meetings of the mothers and the social workers were a combination of factors – they were relaxing; they provided an informal opportunity for the mothers to share some of their interests and concerns with their peers; there was an opportunity for the mothers to learn of some of the social, emotional, and educational needs of their children; and perhaps just as important, the meetings demonstrated that the school was interested in the mothers as mothers and as individuals. In those instances where the mothers groups have continued to meet during the regular school year, workers have reported that the interest, self-confidence, self-concept, and involvement of the mothers have continued to increase.

In relation to Headstart and the mothers groups, there are several points I want to reinforce. The school was going beyond its usual realm in the provision of educational opportunities and the school extended its responsibility beyond children. There were aspects of prevention, community education and community organization. Some

of the mothers groups, with the guidance and support of the visiting teacher or school social worker, have moved into social action activities. Someone from and of the school reached out – and that someone was frequently a visiting teacher or school social worker with the appropriate and meaningful interest, knowledge, skill, and conviction.

With or without Headstart, how many schools utilize the unique services of school social workers or visiting teachers to reach out to parents during kindergarten roundup or kindergarten registration? When a school does not have kindergarten, are the visiting teachers or school social workers a part of the process of parents registering their children for first grade? How many schools, through personal interviews with parents and/or asking parents to complete uncomplicated questionnaires, obtain information about the child's health, habits, friends, family relationships, and the parent's concern about the social-emotional health of the child? If the schools do this, what happens to the information? Is it used to build constructive relationships between home and school; to provide opportunities for parents to form study groups devoted to parent-child relationships, child rearing practices or discipline; or to be a case-finding device in order to offer parents and/or children the assistance of mental health personnel in the school or in the community?

Together, educators and pupil personnel workers know enough or can learn enough with the parents' participation to anticipate that prior to entering school certain children possibly will not be able to make maximum use of school. Do the schools seize this golden opportunity to be of service – or do they wait until the child demonstrates through his behavior or academic failure in school that he is a problem for himself and others? It is amazing and alarming that cumulative folders of fifth and sixth grade children reveal that indications or symptoms of current problems and needs were present during kindergarten and first grade. After these five or six years of unhappiness and suffering on the part of the children and parents plus concern and frustration on the part of several teachers, the time for prevention has passed and the time for treatment is long overdue. How many of you have had parents say to you, "Why didn't the school do something sooner?" That is not an easy question to answer.

The school social workers and visiting teachers have a responsibility to make available to teachers and principals knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences and social work. They are also to provide knowledge gained through professional experience, to share

general information regarding environmental conditions in the school neighborhood, and transmit concerns about community social problems held by other institutions and agencies. This sharing of knowledge and information may be accomplished through consultation or collaboration regarding specific children. However, for purposes of this paper, more appropriate methods would include participation in in-service training and staff development activities on the building or system levels. In cooperation with principals, subject matter coordinators or consultants, the social worker or visiting teacher can arrange to meet with groups of teachers to discuss their areas of concern which fall within the expertise of the worker. The topics may range from the very specific to the very general – from nail biting, squirming, pros and cons of retention, parent-teacher conferences to poverty, cultural deprivation, the housing conditions of segments of the school population.

Whatever the topic, the objectives would be to assist other school personnel in gaining insight and knowledge to the end that they have better understanding and appreciation of the children for whom they carry great responsibility. In the process of these staff development activities, the visiting teacher or school social worker also gains in his understanding and appreciation of school personnel and the school.

While the social worker or visiting teacher and other school personnel work together to develop a sense of trust and mutual respect, the worker is also reaching out to parents, parent groups, community groups, community services and social agencies. Throughout the passing years, the social distance between the school and the middle and upper classes has diminished – but has it diminished enough and moved in the direction which enhances the education of their children? The distance between the school and the lower class parents is still very great – the distance is so great and of the caliber that communication, interaction and cooperation may be either non-existent or of negative value. If the distance between the schools and school personnel and parents who are less fortunate socially and financially is to be diminished, changes must be made by the school and school personnel. We can not expect that these parents will reach out and initiate meaningful kinds of conversations, communications, and joint interactions. More likely than not these parents are not that comfortable with school personnel – these citizens may not have that much self-confidence – these persons may not really know how to

relate on this level at first – and these mothers and fathers may not feel that they are wanted and needed by the school.

So, I say we need to and must extend ourselves by going to them individually and collectively in efforts to involve them in the education of their children. It is not enough to reach out to them (or demand that they come to school) when their child is failing, truant, disobedient, or ill. This kind of reaching out is very difficult to do without waving the big red flag of the school's authority. (This is not to say that school personnel should not use the authority of the school constructively.) We need to build lines of communication and interaction with parents before, during and after a child may be in some of the many kinds of trouble that kids get into.

The approach I am talking about is not focused on specific children with specific or many problems. The focus here is: How do we provide the best and most education and educational opportunities for *all* children? And particularly, how do we provide these for children who, unfortunately, are members of families who get the short end of the stick?

Educators and educationally-related school personnel stress the importance of home-school relationships. One reason we stress this is because we say that school is an extension of the home and family. We say that home and school must work together on behalf of children. We should complement each other and not work at cross purposes. We say that the school can not do its job if parents and children will not cooperate with us. We say these things with the assumption that parents agree with them or should agree with us. What if parents do not agree with us? The home-school relationships break down – if positive relationships ever did exist. We tend to blame the parents – and sometimes the children – and the kids are the ones who are hurt the most and suffer the greatest. In this suffering process, school personnel do some suffering also in that we can not do the job which law and society say we should be doing – and when we can not do what is expected of us we are uncomfortable and maybe feel a bit guilty or sad.

The school social worker and visiting teacher are frequently seen as the link or liaison between the home and the school. However, all too frequently the link is in relation to a child with a problem – not as a link in a fuller sense of the word which goes beyond the direct service component of school social work practice. The link I am talking

about is in the area of community organization which has a community education component.

The following questions could be asked: What business does the school have in organizing a segment of the neighborhood or community? Why should school personnel get involved? I refer to a couple of my basic assumptions stated earlier:

1. The school, with its governing body, administrators, and practitioners, carries a responsibility not only to reflect the educational needs and aspirations of its constituents and society but also has the responsibility to provide leadership, initiative, and programs which will anticipate future needs and aspirations.

2. The constituents of the school have the right, the privilege, and the responsibility to participate in and influence (but not dictate) objectives, plans, and programs of the school. School personnel (visiting teachers and school social workers included, especially included) need to join forces with representatives of other social institutions and agencies in assisting the less fortunate parents and families to participate in, be involved in, and reap more of the rewards of what many of us take for granted – in this instance, public education.

To do this, even on a small beginning scale, takes knowledge, skill, patience, and conviction on the part of the visiting teacher or school social worker – and maybe conviction that this objective is appropriate and necessary is needed more that knowledge, skill, and patience. Also needed is support and sanction on the part of school administrators. But support and sanction will come only if, and after, we have gone through several steps in the community organization process – and presented a well-documented plan to administration. The process must involve inclusion of our colleagues in the school and the professional community. Any plan must be developed and presented with logic and enthusiasm.

It is not possible to go into details as to how you participate in helping a segment of a neighborhood or community to organize itself for self-improvement, enhanced social involvement and increased participation in civic activities. Startling though it might be to some lay and professional persons, there is an unknown and untapped pool of latent energy, creativity, and productivity among parents who may be poorly educated, underemployed, and poorly housed. If the school, home, and community are to be linked together for the benefit of all children regardless of socio-economic status, the school and school

personnel must take the initiative and follow through with sincere and consistent effort. The visiting teachers and school social workers have a vital role to play in all of this.

The preceding material has been directed toward community organization. It is, however, very closely related to and becomes a part of the social action process. This is nothing new for visiting teachers and school social workers as we look at the historical development of visiting teacher services. Participation in community organization, social action and development of educationally programs for children and parents was central to the mission and activities of the first visiting teachers in the United States – this was very early in the 20th century in Boston and New York City and a bit later in Philadelphia and Chicago. These were the early beginnings of school social work when school teachers lived in and/or worked out of the settlement houses. These dedicated and action-oriented school teachers visited the homes of children of school age, got to know their parents, gained an understanding of the social conditions in which the families lived, and developed lines of communication and relationships between home and school.

The early visiting teachers helped develop and promote school services which we now take for granted in many schools–kindergartens, arts and crafts, home economics, manual arts, nursing services and then school-supported and administered visiting teacher services as a separate entity. The public schools of today owe much to the pioneer visiting teachers. The school social workers and visiting teachers of today have reason, very good reason, to view with pride their counterparts of 50 and 60 years ago.

Today the visiting teachers and school social workers have additional functions and responsibilities which those pioneers did not have – but the pioneers had the kind of aggressiveness and conviction which we could do well to revive and implement as we work toward a strong, effective and meaningful link between home, school and community.

# Appendix

- *Institute Program*
- *Institute Trainees and Participants by Discipline*
- *Major Responsibilities of School Social Work as Identified by Institute Trainees*
- *Graduate Social Work Curriculum*

# Institute Program

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1967

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. *Registration and Coffee* - Big Ten Lounge, Iowa Memorial Union, third floor

11:30 a.m. *Luncheon* – Lucas Dodge Room, second floor

12:15 p.m. *Welcome* – Michigan Room, third floor
*Larry D. Pool, ACSW, consultant*
School Social Work Services
Iowa State Department of Public Instruction
*Richard Fischer, Director*
Division of Special Education
Iowa State Department of Public Instruction

*Dr. Frank Glick, Dean*
School of Social Work
University of Iowa

*Ralph Anderson, ACSW*
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
University of Iowa

*Dr. Howard Jones, Dean*
College of Education
University of Iowa

*Jerry L. Kelly, ACSW*
Assistant Dean
School of Social Work
University of Washington

1:00 p.m. *"Education Today"* – Michigan room, third floor
*Jack Bagford, Ph.D.*
Associate Professor
College of Education, University of Iowa

2:30 p.m. *Break*

3:00 p.m. *"The Developing School Team"*
*Don Carr, Ph.D.*
Assistant Professor
College of Education, University of Iowa

4:30 p.m. *Adjourn*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1967

9:00 a.m. *"The School as a Social Institution and Setting for Practice"*
*Dr. N. Deming Hoyt, MSW*
School Social Worker
Windsor Community Schools, Windsor, Connecticut

*Evening group discussion*

10:15 a.m. *Break*
10:40 a.m. *Discussion group, session 1*
*No. 1 Hoyt*: Michigan room
*No. 2 Kelly:* Indiana room
*No. 3 Merl*: Minnesota room
12:00 noon *Lunch*
1:20 p.m. *Discussion group, session 2*
3:30 p.m. *Break*
4:00 p.m. *OPEN HOUSE* with faculty and students of school social work at the School of Social Work at the corner of Burlington and Riverside Drive
5:00 p.m. *Adjourn*
7:00 p.m. *Dinner at the Amana Colonies*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1967

9:00 a.m. *"Factors Which Affect a Model for School Social Work Practice"*
*Jerry L. Kelly*
Assistant Dean
School of Social Work
University of Washington
10:15 am. *Break*
10:40 a.m. *Discussion group, session 1*
*No. 1* — Michigan room
*No. 2* — Indiana room
*No. 3* — Minnesota room
12:00 noon *Luncheon*
1:20 p.m. *Discussion group, session 2*
3:30 p.m. *Break*
4:00 p.m. *Movie*: *"Freddie"* — Indiana room
5:00 p.m. *Break*
5:15 p.m. *Meeting of all trainees regarding statistical reports*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1967

9:00 a.m. *"The Social Worker as a Link Between School, Home, and Community"*
*Lawrence Merl, Associate Professor, ACSW*
School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

10:15 a.m. *Break*

10:40 a.m. *Discussion group, session 1*
*No. 1* — Michigan room
*No. 2* — Indiana room
*No. 3* — Minnesota room

12:00 noon *Luncheon*

1:20 p.m. *Discussion group, session 2*

3:30 p.m. *Break*

4:00 p.m. *Discussion of the role of the "School Social Work Associate"*

*Ralph Anderson, ACSW*
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
University of Iowa

*Wayne Johnson*
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
University of Iowa

*Larry D. Pool, ACSW, consultant*
School Social Work Services
Iowa State Department of Public Instruction

5:00 p.m. *Adjourn*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1967

9:00 a.m. *Identifying the major issues of the week*

*Jerry L. Kelly, ACSW*
Assistant Dean
School of Social Work
University of Washington

*Mrs. Joan Vincent, MSW*
School Social Worker
Burlington Community Schools

*Frank Singer, MSW*
School Social Worker
Des Moines Public School System

*Keith Klyn, ACSW*
Coordinator
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

11:00 a.m. *"Title VI and Innovative Services to the Handicapped"*
*Richard Fischer, Director*
Division of Special Education
Iowa State Department of Public Instruction

# Institute Trainees and Participants by Discipline

(Trainees)

*SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Wayne Allen | Sioux City Community Schools<br>Sioux City, Iowa 51105 |
| Maurice Beale | 1800 Grand Avenue<br>Des Moines Public Schools<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50307 |
| Donald Bramschreiber | Wapello County Court House<br>Ottumwa, Iowa 52501 |
| Margaret Ellerhoff | Des Moines County Court House<br>Burlington, Iowa 52601 |
| Elizabeth Johnson | 1800 Grand Avenue<br>Des Moines Public Schools<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50307 |
| Keith Klyn | Mental Health Institute<br>Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641 |
| Jane McMonigle | Amos Hiatt Junior High School<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50309 |
| Louise Perry | Columbus Community School<br>Columbus Junction, Iowa 52738 |
| Sandra Ewens | Pine School<br>Iowa City, Iowa 52240 |
| Raymond Gamet | Scott County Court House<br>Davenport, Iowa 52803 |
| Richard Gregory | Scott-Muscatine School System<br>Davenport, Iowa 52803 |
| Linda Hodges | Boone Community Schools<br>Boone, Iowa 50036 |
| Frank Singer | Irving Junior High School<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50309 |
| Sara Smerud | Eastern Allamakee Comm. Schools<br>Lansing, Iowa 52151 |
| Marjorie Steere | Mt. Pleasant Community Schools<br>Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641 |
| Joan Vincent | Burlington Community Schools<br>Burlington, Iowa 52601 |

### *COORDINATORS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Roby Fretwell | Keokuk Community Schools<br>Keokuk, Iowa 52632 |
| James Harris | Woodbury County Schools<br>Sioux City, Iowa 51105 |

### *GUIDANCE COUNSELORS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Esther Garwick | 1800 Grand Avenue<br>Des Moines Public Schools<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50307 |
| Ronald Hinrichs | North Scott Elem. School<br>Eldridge, Iowa 52748 |
| Mary Veline | Osage Community Schools<br>Osage, Iowa 50461 |

### *VISITING TEACHERS*
*(now classified as school social workers)*

Maxine Hartung
Robert McLaughlin
Marjorie Oggel
Veda Rasmussen
Howard Shelton
Keith Van Horn

Leo Yanasak
Des Moines Public Schools
1800 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50307

### *DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION*

| | |
|---|---|
| William Brown | Coralville Central School<br>Coralville, Iowa 52240 |
| Robert Gibson | c/o County Supt. of Schools<br>112-11 Street<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50309 |

### *SCHOOL NURSES*

| | |
|---|---|
| Fredonna Elton | Des Moines Public Schools<br>1800 Grand Avenue<br>Des Moines, Iowa 50307 |
| Efstathia Matson | Boone Community Schools<br>Boone, Iowa 50036 |

### *CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST*

| | |
|---|---|
| Joan Clary | Woodward-Granger Comm. Schools<br>Woodward, Iowa 50276 |

### *SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ray Beamer | Le Mars Community Schools<br>Le Mars, Iowa 51031 |
| Vincent Foubert | Clinton Community Schools<br>Clinton, Iowa 52732 |
| Loren Iverson | Cedar Falls Community Schools<br>Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613 |
| Leo Ogden | Waterloo Community Schools<br>Waterloo, Iowa 50702 |
| Mary Roose | Washington Community Schools<br>Washington, Iowa 52353 |
| Donald Tupper | Davenport Community Schools<br>Davenport, Iowa 52803 |

### *PRINCIPAL*

| | |
|---|---|
| L. Gail Bailey | Mason City Community Schools<br>Mason City, Iowa 50401 |

### *OTHER PARTICIPANTS*
*(Non-trainees)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Claire Burnell<br>School Social Worker | Keokuk Community Schools<br>Keokuk, Iowa 52632 |
| Annabel Brantley, Consultant, School Social Work | State Department of Education<br>Tallahassee, Florida 32304 |
| Mrs. Kyle Reed, R.N.<br>School Nurse | Central Dallas Community School<br>Minburn, Iowa 50167 |
| James Rockwell<br>Adult Education | Maquoketa Community Schools<br>Maquoketa, Iowa 52060 |
| Rex Shaffer<br>Guidance Counselor | Linn County Court House<br>Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404 |
| Patricia Wallace<br>Program Specialist | Department of Education<br>Honolulu, Hawaii 98000 |

# Major Responsibilities of School Social Work as Identified by Institute Trainees

Contacting outside agencies as well as making contact and working directly with the parents.

*A coordinator of all agencies attempting to assist people with difficulties.*

At the local level we have always felt there was a breakdown after a problem had been identified by the teacher, principal, or psychologist. There is a great need for the social worker at the local level to fill this gap.

*Be an active participating member of the mental health team which assesses, diagnoses, and in some cases, treats the pupil and/or the parents.*

Provide early screening and early identification of emotional and educational problems and make provisions for evaluation and treatment before the problem becomes acute.

*Serve as a link between home, school, and community with emphasis on promoting more cooperative and satisfactory working relationships between the school, home, and community agencies.*

The school social worker should be a caseworker, a collaborator, coordinator, and a consultant.

*. . . Place an emphasis on the beginning school experience . . . to prevent serious problems which now take up most of the time of today's social workers and guidance counselors.*

Group screening followed by parent counseling to prevent many adjustment failures.

*The school social worker does not work as an individual, but rather as a part of a team. He may give immediate help, or he may lay the groundwork for a long range program—whichever is necessary. He may handle the problem himself, or he may refer it to one or more agencies. He may also call on the help of such personnel as teachers, consultant, nurses, counselors, psychologists, principals, advisors, the medical profession, and others.*

The objective of school social work is to promote the welfare of children deprived of normal adjustment to school achievement and situations due to one or more of the following reasons: social maladjustment, emotional maladjustment, pre-delinquent behavior, physical handicaps, mental deficiency, and other causes.

*Coordination with other agencies: The school social worker is also a coordinator. It is often the school worker who serves as a liaison between home and the school, between agencies and the school, or between different personnel in the school. Through the school social worker the community agencies have a natural avenue of communication to the school and the school to the community agencies. The social workers special knowledge of the community is thus more readily available as a basis for informed school decisions as well as for informed decisions by community agencies involving school-aged children and their families.*

Through casework interviews the child is helped to acquire a better understanding of himself and his situation, to find his own strengths, and to use the strengths in improving his adjustments at school, with his family, and in his peer relationships.

*These services include: (1) direct casework with student and/or family; (2) utilization of appropriate community resources; (3) consultation and collaboration with school personnel; (4) coordination of school and community efforts; (5) early identification and treatment of potential emotional difficulties; and (6) the provision of accurate data for the completion of research.*

The school social worker provides services designed to enhance the social functioning of the individual student. Equated with enhanced social functioning is the increased ability of the student to learn, thus accomplishing the goals of the educator to provide basic academic

*Small group discussion*

knowledge, promote good citizenship, and help the individual more fully realize his potential.

*Develops satisfactory lines of communication and relationships between home and school. Explanation, interpretation, and use of school policy functions (services) and personnel.*

The school social worker is a member of the school staff who is specially trained to work with children who have difficulty in adjusting to the normal school program. His work is to provide assistance to the pupils, their teachers, and their parents in overcoming problems that keep the child from achieving satisfactory progress in his studies.

*Provide for school personnel, much needed in-service understanding of the social problems of the community.*

The school social worker communicates a feeling of concern for those who are troubled and disadvantaged.

*Get to the "grass roots" of the problems of the community—be available and active.*

It is also helpful if the worker is skilled in guiding group discussions as these discussions can be excellent therapy for parents.

*The social worker should be capable of speaking to groups on a variety of subjects which would relate to the general welfare and development of the child.*

School social work should strengthen the bonds between home and school with the worker acting as a liaison between the two. Improved communications can prevent many misunderstandings! The worker has an opportunity to be in the homes and to talk with parents in their

*School Social Work visit*

own surroundings where they are most secure and feel more at ease.

*An ideal role of the school social worker would be to discover the child who is likely to be educationally deprived before he enters kindergarten. In attempting to recognize the probable problems of the pre-school child the social worker is a member of the staff that registers children in the spring for the fall term of school. She interviews the parent with the child. If she wishes to talk with the mother she makes an appointment at this time. This is an introduction to the school social worker and an opportunity to tell of the available services.*

A social worker should also work closely with state institutions, such as our mental health institutes and our training schools, helping to prepare schools and families for previously disturbed students' reentry into society from an institution.

*The social worker will be available as a referral source for direct services to parents, children, or both. He will become involved in extending direct services in an effort to effect change resulting in better school adjustment for the child. In bringing about change he would utilize his own knowledge and skills, as well as utilization of other existing community agencies when appropriate.*

A social worker should be able to interpret the child, his home, and his family to the administration and teachers of the school.

*In continuous collaboration with his colleagues, particularly those in the teaching and special services professions, he works toward the goal of minimizing disharmony and fostering utilization of educational resources. He consults with practitioners of other disciplines and in turn is consulted by them. This is conducive to a flow of knowledge centering about the student and his role in the social institution of the school. He practices casework, through direct intervention in the lives of students and their families; group work, through initiating and stimulating group interaction; community organization, to reduce factors hindering education and encourage forces promoting it.*

The elementary level child is considered to be the prime candidate or recipient of the school social worker's services as far as prevention is concerned.

*The school social worker often serves as a resource person or leader in discussions regarding parent-teacher conferences, discipline, special needs of certain children, child-parent relationships, and family life education.*

# Graduate Social Work Curriculum

*by Jerry L. Kelley*

The curriculum in schools of social work is standardized and the schools accredited by the Council of Social Work Education. By and large the curriculum content in professional schools of social work is roughly the same from one school to another and has to be.

First of all, there is what might be called *understanding social welfare.* This relates to the history of social welfare and social work, the value system that it adheres to, the ethical behavior that describes the practice and limits the practice and the knowledge of all the various kinds of social institutions that man has developed in order to help himself individually and collectively. This ranges from individual service agencies to the broad, comprehensive programs of Social Security. In this the student would generally be required to take approximately four to six courses.

The second major area of the curriculum is what might be called *understanding human beings.* This includes from the time of conception, really, to the time of death. The whole range of human development in many different phases is considered. Most schools of social work have evolved what might be called a more eclectic kind of approach to human behavior and growth, and are doing much of the teaching themselves. But regardless of who teaches it the emphasis is on understanding people individually and collectively. And we draw heavily, of course, on academic disciplines such as psychology and sociology as well as other professional disciplines.

The third area might be called *understanding and applying the methods of helping;* that is social work intervention, which means how one goes about trying to help others in the resolution of their problems; or help some social system in the resolution of its problems. The traditional methodological emphases are in social case work which is working with the individuals, essentially; social group work, which is working with more than one person; and social-community organization which has to do with the study and planning of action phases of tackling broader types of community needs and problems. In addition to that, there is a lot of emphasis currently on what might be called the method of consultation, and there is a substantial emphasis on social work administration as a related method. But most

students become primarily prepared to practice case work, group work, or community organization with the bulk of them concentrating in the case work area. All of them have some exposure to some beginning competence in the employment of the other methods as well.

In some ways the most important component in addition to the classroom teaching is the field instruction or the practicum. This educational method is designed to help the student put into practice what he is presumably learning in the classroom. And a great deal of emphasis goes into this. While there are variations, of course, we like to think there is a substantial amount of quality control in the process. Students will have a minimum of about 1000 clock hours of this closely supervised field instruction.

Finally, there is the *research component.* Usually one or two introductory courses to statistics and research are required, and then a fairly major involvement in either a group research project of some kind or an individual thesis. The usual focus of the research effort is to prepare the student to be an intelligent consumer of research rather than a research practitioner; but he is exposed enough to the method so that, hopefully, he will go out into the field reasonably well prepared to at least identify research areas that he might relate himself to or help someone else to relate himself to.

This is the basic curriculum. It usually is spread over two academic years in full-time enrollment or some equivalent thereof.

The social work professional education has moved to an emphasis on what we call the generic base. Therefore, while the student elects a major in the methods area, the conviction of the profession is that any good social worker ought to be able to work in a variety of agencies; hence the basic education is common. However, a student knows that he probably wants to work in the schools; then he may be provided with a field or practicum experience in the school setting. The real task, then, of the social worker going into any host setting or secondary setting, such as the schools, is to adapt himself in which he is going to work.